

CONTENTS

1	THE PIANO AND ITS POSSIBILITIES . . .	1
2	BEETHOVEN— THE SONATA FORM . . .	21
3	BEETHOVEN'S FIRST PERIOD	39
4	THE TRANSITION TO BEETHOVEN'S SECOND PERIOD	59
5	BEETHOVEN'S SECOND PERIOD	87
6	BEETHOVEN'S THIRD PERIOD	109
7	ROMANTICISM— FRANZ PETER SCHU- BERT	125
8	ROBERT ALEXANDER SCHUMANN . . .	147
9	FRANÇOIS FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN— Rondos, Mazurkas, Nocturnes, Études, Waltzes . . .	183
10	CHOPIN'S LARGER WORKS— Scherzi, Bal- lades, Polonaises, Préludes, Impromptus, So- natas, Fantaisie	213
11	JOHANNES BRAHMS— THE EARLIER WORKS	251
12	JOHANNES BRAHMS— THE LATER WORKS	285
13	ACHILLE CLAUDE DEBUSSY	319
	APPENDIX: First Essentials of Piano Technique . .	345
	INDEX	367

Piano Music
of
Six Great Composers

The
PRENTICE-HALL MUSIC SERIES
Douglas Moore, *Editor*

*Piano Music
of
Six Great Composers*

Donald N. Ferguson

University of Minnesota

New York

PRENTICE-HALL, INC.

1947

726.4

F35 p.

COPYRIGHT, 1947, BY

PRENTICE-HALL, INC.

70 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NO PART OF THIS BOOK MAY BE
REPRODUCED IN ANY FORM, BY MIMEOGRAPH OR ANY OTHER
MEANS, WITHOUT PERMISSION IN WRITING FROM THE
PUBLISHERS.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

CELIUS DOUGHERTY

An echo of our distant Wednesdays

FOREWORD

THIS BOOK is frankly an experiment. It is an attempt to present, in comparatively compact space but with reference to a large number of musical problems, that word to the wise which the proverb says is sufficient.

It assumes on the part of the reader no profound musical knowledge, but nevertheless a certain musical wisdom. The ability—or perhaps one should rather say, the disposition—to read music accurately is presupposed, including that decent respect for time values which does not always accompany precise observation of the pitch values of notes. It assumes also some familiarity with the ordinary terminology of music. But this being taken for granted, the book is addressed to the reader's common sense, a faculty indispensable to wisdom; and it is thus addressed because of the author's belief—often disappointed, yet in the main substantiated by long practical experience—that the true musical instinct, which is a species of common sense, is not rare, and that that faculty, properly oriented, is capable of illuminated vision.

The experiment has been set up with care. The orienting facts have been set forth with every effort toward clarity, and the more general appeals to the reader's intuition have been made in the hope that they will be seen to rest upon or derive from a basis of knowable fact. The most indisputable of these facts—and for many readers doubtless the most unwelcome—is that the piano is a mechanism, whose operation is in no way miraculous. Good piano playing does indeed disguise this fact successfully and

might almost be said to be good in proportion as it is successful. The highly gifted pianist may often achieve the most flawless results without ever being aware of the mechanical fact; but even he cannot produce those results in defiance of it. And his intuitive discovery of the possibilities of his instrument is almost inevitably slower than it might have been if the nature and the limitations of the mechanism had been recognized from the beginning.

These limitations have therefore been discussed at the outset. What follows is an attempt to shorten the reader's path to an interpretative understanding of a fairly large portion of the great literature of the piano—and to shorten it by recognizing and invoking the elemental facts. Appeal to the intuition is often made. In many instances, indeed, it is the only offered comment; for it is evident that minute discussion of the technical problems presented by all the compositions mentioned would fill innumerable pages. It is believed, however, that enough detailed analysis of technical and interpretative questions has been offered so that the reader, having studied in this light a number of works of a given grade, may interpret similar pieces for himself with a growing confidence in his own judgment.

In the selection of certain compositions for detailed study, and in the consequent rejection of others, it may appear that the author's personal preference, rather than the individual reader's need or desire, has been consulted. Against this plea, the only defense that can be offered is that the selection has been made rather out of the writer's experience of his pupils' interest than out of his own, and that he had no better guide than the preference of those pupils to show him what would probably be the most interesting pieces for his readers.

It may also be objected that the book is confined almost wholly to music of the nineteenth century. But for such an experiment as this, it was natural to deal with the period in which the piano-forte had emerged as the world's most favored solo instrument and in which the most significant literature for that instrument

was written. Keyboard music before the end of the eighteenth century was composed not for the piano but for the harpsichord or the clavichord, and the transfer to the piano of music in this older idiom is a special problem, best solved when the literature here explored is familiar. The author can imagine no pleasanter task than to attempt another experiment in that field. But he would need, for such an effort, to know in what ways this present experiment has been at fault. Criticism in this direction will be most gratefully received.

The following is a list of the easier compositions for which more or less explicit directions for study are given in the text. They are divided into two grades, the second being the more difficult. It should be understood that all the comments presuppose the approach suggested in Chapter 1.

I

Beethoven, Op. 2, No. 1, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd movements	25f
Schubert, Impromptu in A flat	128f
—, Impromptu in G flat	130f
—, Moment musical in A flat	135
Schumann, Romanze in F sharp	154
—, Arabeske	155
—, Romanze, from Faschingsschwank	165
Chopin, Mazurka in B flat	188f
—, Nocturne in G minor	198
—, Préludes, Nos. 4, 6, 7, 15, 20	231f
Debussy, Arabesque in E	322
—, Clair de lune	324
—, La fille au cheveux de lin	340

II

Beethoven, Op. 10, No. 3, 2nd and 3rd movements	41f
—, Op. 13, 2nd and 3rd movements	54f
—, Op. 26, Funeral March	71f

—, Op. 27, No. 1, 1st movement	75
—, Op. 27, No. 2, 1st and 2nd movements	76
—, Op. 31, No. 2, 2nd movement	90
—, Op. 81a, 2nd movement	111
—, Op. 90	112
Schubert, Impromptu in A flat, Op. 90	132
—, Moment musical, C-sharp minor	134
—, Sonata in B flat, 2nd and 3rd movements	139f
Schumann, Papillons, Op. 2	149f
—, Aufschwung	156
—, Des Abends	158
—, Davidsbündler, Nos. 2, 5, 7, 11, 18	158f
—, Faschingsschwank	163
—, Kinderszenen	176f
Chopin, Mazurka, Op. 24, No. 4	192f
—, Nocturne, Op. 15, No. 2	195f
—, Étude, Op. 25, No. 7	208f
—, Valse, C-sharp minor	210f
—, Polonaise, E-flat minor	227f
—, Prélude in A flat	236
Brahms, Scherzo, E-flat minor	256f
—, Sonata in F minor, slow movements	258f
—, Ballades, Op. 10	267
—, Intermezzi, Op. 76, Nos. 4, 6, 7	290f
—, Rhapsody, G minor	295
—, Intermezzo, A minor, Op. 116, No. 2	298
—, Intermezzo in E, Op. 116, No. 4	299f
—, Intermezzi, Op. 117	303f
—, Intermezzo, Op. 119, No. 1	312
Debussy, Danse	323
—, Prélude, Danseuses de Delphes	337

The student who has mastered a fair number of these pieces may browse at will among the more difficult numbers. It would serve no purpose to attempt to grade these according to their difficulty.